

- (11) 'Party' means a petitioner, adoptee, or any person whose consent to an adoption is necessary under this Chapter but has not been obtained.
- (12) 'Physical custody' means the physical care of and control over an individual.
- (13) 'Placement' means transfer of physical custody of a minor to the selected prospective adoptive parent. Placement may be either:
  - a. Direct placement by a parent or the guardian of the minor; or
  - b. Placement by an agency.
- (14) 'Preplacement assessment' means a document, whether prepared before or after placement, that contains the information required by G.S. 48-3-303 and any rules adopted by the Social Services Commission.
- (15) 'Relinquishment' means the voluntary surrender of a minor to an agency for the purpose of adoption.
- (16) 'Report to the court' means a document prepared in accordance with G.S. 48-2-501, et seq.
- (17) 'State' means a state as defined in G.S. 12-3(11).
- (18) 'Stepparent' means an individual who is the spouse of a parent of a child, but who is not a legal parent of the child.

" § 48-1-102. Parent includes adoptive parent.

As used in this Article, the term 'parent' includes one who has become a parent by adoption.

" § 48-1-103. Who may adopt.

Any adult may adopt another individual as provided in this Chapter, but spouses may not adopt each other.

" § 48-1-104. Who may be adopted.

Any individual may be adopted as provided in this Chapter.

" § 48-1-105. Name of adoptee after adoption.

When a decree of adoption becomes final, the name of the adoptee shall become the name designated in the decree.

" § 48-1-106. Legal effect of decree of adoption.

(a) A decree of adoption effects a complete substitution of families for all legal purposes after the entry of the decree.

(b) A decree of adoption establishes the relationship of parent and child between each petitioner and the individual being adopted. From the date of the signing of the decree, the adoptee is entitled to inherit real and personal property by, through, and from the adoptive parents in accordance with the statutes on intestate succession and has the same legal status, including all legal rights and obligations of any kind whatsoever, as a child born the legitimate child of the adoptive parents.

(c) A decree of adoption severs the relationship of parent and child between the individual adopted and that individual's biological or previous adoptive parents. After the entry of a decree of adoption, the former parents are relieved of all legal duties and obligations due from them to the adoptee, except that a former parent's duty to make past-due payments for child support is not terminated, and the former parents are divested of all rights with respect to the adoptee.